

Top Secret 217

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, April 23, 1977.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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USSR: Lenin Day Speech

25X1 [] *The Soviet leadership's annual Lenin Day speech, delivered Friday by M. V. Zimyanin, the party secretary for culture and propaganda, featured a tough, uncompromising exposition of Moscow's views on relations with China and the US but contained few surprises.*

25X1 [] In remarks that provoked a Chinese walkout, Zimyanin accused Peking of making common cause with reactionary forces. His criticism of China, the strongest by a member of the leadership since Mao died, evidently reflects Soviet frustration that there have been no changes in post-Mao policy toward the USSR.

25X1 [] Turning to the US, Zimyanin assailed unnamed opponents of detente for impeding "urgent" arms control measures while fanning the arms race. He assured his listeners that the USSR remains steadfast in its search for mutually acceptable solutions to arms control problems, but reiterated the Soviet line that they must be based on existing agreements and understandings, a reference to the Vladivostok accords. He characterized recent US proposals as unsound and one-sided.

25X1 [] Zimyanin heaped scorn on the Western campaign for human rights but did not mention the US by name in this context.

25X1 [] Zimyanin's shrill tone was in marked contrast to the reasoned, moderate character of the Lenin Day address last year by Politburo member Andropov. Zimyanin's speech was, however, couched in the strong ideological terms customary to the occasion.

25X1 [] All members of the leadership turned out for the ceremony except party secretary Kirilenko and First Deputy Premier Mazurov, Politburo members who presumably remain ill.

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USSR-SYRIA: Asad's visit

25X1 [] *The communique issued last night at the conclusion of Syrian President Asad's five-day visit to the USSR indicates that the two sides resolved at least some of their differences.*

25X1 [] The text states that the two sides outlined "steps for further raising the level" of Syrian defenses, and calls for "further deepening" bilateral economic and technical co-operation, suggesting that the Soviets have agreed to supply the Syrians with additional arms and economic assistance. In addition to the top leaders, Soviet participants in the talks included Marshal Ogarkov, chief of the General Staff, and foreign aid specialist Skachkov.

25X1 [] Asad clearly wanted to ensure that his severely strained relations with Moscow were patched up so that he would be in the strongest possible position for his talks with President Carter in Geneva on May 9. Asad probably is satisfied with the outcome. Syrian media have given the trip heavy coverage, stressing the "strategic" nature of Syrian-Soviet relations and, by extension, Soviet recognition of the "key" role Syria plays in Middle East peace negotiations.

25X1 [] The Syrians replayed portions of General Secretary Brezhnev's banquet remarks, including his statement that Israel, as well as the Palestinian people, has a right to an "independent state and secure existence."

25X1 [] The USSR and Syria stated that the Palestine Liberation Organization must be at any reconvened peace conference in Geneva "from the very beginning and on an equal footing." This language contrasts with what had appeared to be a recent Soviet shift away from insistence on Palestinian representation at the outset.

25X1 [] The communique refers to "a constructive exchange of opinion" on "highly important" problems, one of which presumably was the disagreement over Syrian intervention in Lebanon.

25X1 [] The two sides condemned Israel's "unceasing provocations" in southern Lebanon and "noted with satisfaction" a process of "normalization" in the Lebanese situation. This formulation reflects obvious Soviet approval of Syria's support for the Palestinian side in its clashes with Christian forces in southern Lebanon in recent weeks and does not suggest a shift to overall Soviet backing for Syria's intervention.

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ZAIRE: Situation Report

25X1 [] *The military situation in southern Zaire appears to have changed very little since government forces began to advance westward from the Kolwezi area earlier this week.*

25X1 [] The northern task force, which departed from Nason-doye, is now reported to be near Kayembe and has been ordered to take the town. The southern task force, traveling along the rail line, apparently has bogged down a few kilometers east of Kayembe.

25X1 [] Neither force appears to be meeting much resistance from the Katangans, suggesting that the invaders, recognizing that the tide may have turned in the Dilolo-Kolwezi area, could be taking to the bush to avoid clashes. It is also possible that, faced with growing government pressure on the main avenues to Kolwezi, they will seek to isolate the town by infiltrating the surrounding countryside and attacking key transportation links and utilities.

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25X1 [] the government is planning a major offensive--possibly for this weekend--to retake Mutshatsha. This operation apparently would be in addition to the two task forces currently moving westward.//


25X1 [] Such an attack may be stalled, however, by the growing logistics bottleneck. The Zairian air force is not getting supplies to the south fast enough and the requisition of a few civilian transport aircraft apparently has not stepped up the flow.

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PAKISTAN: General Strike


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 *The general strike and demonstrations yesterday in Pakistan led to the worst violence so far in the opposition's campaign to bring down Prime Minister Bhutto. The military is being increasingly drawn into law enforcement as the government seeks to prevent further violence.*

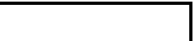
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 In Karachi yesterday, the army became embroiled in its first serious clash with demonstrators. Troops reportedly fired on a demonstration staged during a break in the curfew, killing a number of protesters.


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 In the Punjab, the crucial province in the current crisis, the city of Lahore--under martial law and a curfew--apparently was relatively quiet, but there was serious violence in two other major cities, Multan and Lyallpur. Violence apparently is spreading to smaller cities as well. The army is composed largely of Punjabis who would be more reluctant to fire on fellow Punjabis than, for instance, citizens of Karachi. This is a vulnerability the opposition may try to exploit.

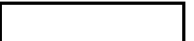
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 Serious violence erupted for the first time in Peshawar, the capital of the North-West Frontier Province, where police fired on a mob attacking a bank.

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 Bhutto could soon put other areas under military control. The US embassy doubts, however, that the military would be willing to assume responsibility for maintaining order for any length of time.

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 At most, the imposition of martial law seems to have bought Bhutto a little time to try to work out a compromise

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with his opponents. There is speculation that he is about to offer further concessions. Reports that jailed opposition leaders are being brought together for talks with him have been denied by the government. There is no hard evidence that Bhutto is willing to accept any significant diminution of his power or that the opposition is willing to settle for less than his resignation.

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SPAIN: Communist Legalization

//Prime Minister Suarez is still concerned about the military's reaction to the recent legalization of the Spanish Communist Party.

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The Communists also are trying to placate military opposition to their new legal status.//

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//The reaction of the military has preoccupied the government since the legalization. Allegations by some generals that the military was not consulted are untrue, according to Deputy Prime Minister Osorio. Suarez reportedly discussed the matter with all military ministers and most of the top-ranking generals--although he may not have been candid about the manner in which the legalization would be carried out.//

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[REDACTED] //This week, the government issued a decree reminding the military that it is barred from politics, and apparently now feels that the reaction of the military has cooled. Even those military leaders who strenuously opposed legalization apparently see no acceptable alternative to bowing to the government's decision. Relations between the government and the military have nevertheless been strained

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[REDACTED] //The government is still wary of extensive efforts by the rightist Popular Alliance to stir up military resentment. There are some indications that senior military officers have reached agreement with the Popular Alliance to apply pressure on Suarez to stay out of the election campaign. The right fears that Suarez' popularity would swing votes to the center, further strengthening his position.//

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[REDACTED] For its part, the Communist Party has sought to avoid further provoking the military. In a press conference last week, Secretary General Carrillo said that one of the party's major goals must be to destroy the "distorted caricature" created by years of Francoist propaganda. He attempted to reassure the military by:

--Endorsing the monarchy, as long as it continues to work for the establishment of democracy.

--Reiterating the Communist commitment to democracy; the party's election slogan will be "To vote Communist is to vote for democracy."

--Emphasizing the party's support for national unity.

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[REDACTED] Carrillo again asserted that the Communists would run their own candidates for the lower house while seeking a broad coalition of the left and center-left for the senate contest. Leftists and centrists expect to do well in the lower house, where proportional representation will give added weight to the

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urban areas where they are strongest. In the upper house there will be four senators from each province. This will probably strengthen the right, which is popular in rural areas.

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BANGLADESH: Referendum

Chief martial law administrator General Zia ur-Rahman, who became president of Bangladesh on Thursday, announced yesterday that he will hold a referendum on May 30 to determine his acceptability as head of state. He said local and municipal elections will be held in August, and a national election in December 1978.

As Bangladesh's de facto leader since he took power following a military coup in November 1975, Zia has been under pressure from some politicians to return the nation to democratic rule. He is likely to win the referendum; he has been a moderately successful leader and appears to be popular with both the military and civilians. His crackdown on corruption, smuggling, and inefficiency in government has been well received.

Since Zia took power, Bangladesh has enjoyed a degree of stability and prosperity unknown since the nation's independence in 1971. He has appealed to Bangladeshi nationalism by his vigorous opposition to India when bilateral disputes have arisen. He has brought the restive Bangladesh army under control by placing trusted colleagues in key command positions and by personally dealing with incipient crises. In recent months, Zia has taken on the role of politician and statesman, giving rise to rumors that elections are in the offing.

If Zia wins the referendum handily, he could claim that the vote legitimizes his rule and could disband the martial law administration, //which he has said is no longer useful.// If Zia plans to contest for national leadership in the 1978 election, he will probably need to form his own political party or win the support of one of the established parties. The release of over 700 political prisoners yesterday, including some influential politicians, may be intended to improve his chances of winning some support within existing parties.

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[] Zia realizes that he must retain the support of the armed forces if he is to remain in power. For this reason, he will probably keep his position as army chief of staff.

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[] Zia's assumption of the presidency probably has already irked some within the military. Should he now disband the martial law administration, the air force and navy--whose leaders hold some power as deputy martial law administrators--could become disaffected with Zia's rule. Both services are small, however; the real power remains with the army. []

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